

# Sunnyvale Creative Arts Center Gallery

in partnership with the

## Euphrat Museum of Art

NEWS RELEASE

December 11, 1995

### Exhibition:

*Bread, Flowers, and Candles: Painted Photographs by Lissa Jones and Curtis Fukuda*

Sunnyvale Creative Arts Center Gallery  
550 E. Remington, Box 3707  
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3707

January 12 - March 9, 1996  
Tuesday through Friday 1 - 5 pm, Saturday 10 am - 12 noon

Lissa Jones and Curtis Fukuda present various series of painted photographs at the Sunnyvale Creative Arts Center Gallery. The exhibition *Bread, Flowers, and Candles* reflects an exploration of these two artists into the mysteries of spirit, life, and death — based on a collaboration of over six years. The exhibition was curated by the Euphrat Museum of Art, as part of an occasional series focusing on artists in Santa Clara Valley.

Jones and Fukuda have made multiple trips to Mexico to document aspects of ritual life in Oaxaca, for example home altars, civic altars, and family and community gatherings in the cemetery. These activities are particularly focused around el Día de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead), when altars become quite elaborate with momentos and pan de muertos (bread) and people bring marigolds and other flowers to the graves.

What Fukuda and Jones look for is a feeling of life. For example, an altar often holds objects reflecting a mixture of indigenous beliefs, Catholicism, pop culture, personal treasures, and the practical. Candy skulls, flowers, a cross, and family photographs, carefully arranged on a plastic tablecloth, may stand next to a picture of Sylvester Stallone and a candle in a Valvoline oil can. This art form, drawn from multiple cultures, is then altered by Fukuda and Jones, in the processes of photography and paint.

“Otherworldly” and “meditative” and “offerings” are some of the words the artists use to describe their art. But the art and exploration is more. “It became important to understand its (el Día’s) effect on us.

Sunnyvale Creative Arts Center Gallery, 550 E. Remington, Box 3707, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3707  
(408) 730-7336 For Deaf access call TDD/TTY (408) 730-7501  
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As Asian Americans who have grown up with our own set of rituals, we found commonality in the Oaxacan view of life and death." While Fukuda grew up in East San Jose amidst Latino culture, it was something he realized later that he took for granted.

The preciousness and meanings of objects are expanded in their artworks, and move across more cultural boundaries. Mounds of bread and other foods. Flowers galore. An array of persistent burning candles. In one image, a candle burns bright despite being in a cubicle with an iron grate in the form of a stylized "X" in front of it. Jones states, "Everyone adds something to the altar. Sometimes children make their own. There are treasured objects from generations ago." And, "This is an ongoing conversation for us. The myths and story telling. Everything has a story."

Jones and Fukuda have created painted photographs from Oaxacan cemetery statues and make them seem alive. Jones states, "The sculptures *are* very much alive. Some seem like healthy, working women, female spirit entities, taking spirits to the next world, nurturing, care-giving."

The preciousness and meanings of objects are also expanded in a current Fukuda/Jones series of small narrative images, frequently involving male/female interaction. Some include images used in altars, such as hearts: a heart in a lap, a heart in a hand.

When working on their own, this reverence for all life forms (as well as a playfulness), the story telling, and the exploration into spirit, life and death, come through. For example, in his studio, Fukuda has created altar-like art from found objects. Also he has begun to look at the altars in his own upbringing and has photographed the Buddhist altar of his parents for future projects.

Jones and Fukuda see the whole interaction with people in Oaxaca as life-expanding. Fukuda: "After many visits to Oaxaca, we see the transformation that Mexico is undergoing. So our work is also documenting traditions that change due to modernization and a volatile economy."

Jones and Fukuda return often to Oaxaca, taking copies of their work to people whose altars they photographed. They have exhibited their work in Oaxaca. Oaxaca is a Sister City of Palo Alto, where Fukuda has maintained a studio. They have also joined the Sister City organization and Fukuda has hosted students and young people in his home. Fukuda holds a B.A. in Radio, Television, and Film from San Jose State University. Jones hold a M. A. in Sculpture from San Jose State.

Sponsored by City of Sunnyvale, Department of Parks and Recreation, Cultural Arts Division, in collaboration with the Euphrat Museum of Art, De Anza College.

**Contact:**

For information about the exhibition, call the Euphrat Museum of Art at (408) 864-8836. To schedule tours or for gallery information, call the Creative Arts Center Gallery at (408) 730-7336

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